

Grace Episcopal Church
Hamden, Connecticut

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Connecticut

Historic American Buildings Survey
Harold H. Davis, District Officer
29 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Hamden, New Haven, County, Conn.

Owner: Grace Church

Date of Erection: 1820

Architect or Builder: David Hoadley

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories:

Materials of Construction: Stone foundation
Clapboard sidewalls
Wood shingled roof
All timbers throughout hand hewed

Other Existing Records: History of Grace Church, Hamden,
Conn. - By Rev. James Edward Coley,
New Haven, 1913.

List of Photographs:

1. Front Elevation (South)
2. North Wall Showing Altar
3. Attic Framing

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

Grace Church, Hamden, ranks among the oldest parishes in the diocese of Connecticut. In March 1790, there gathered those of Mount Carmel in said Hamden, who belonged to the Episcopal Church, to form an Episcopal Society. (The meeting was held March 6, 1790). The first services were held at the house of Stephen Pardee in Hamden, for which Mr. Pardee received two shillings per day, and for some time services were held at the homes of various official members of the Church.

In December 1794, the Committee voted to secure a site for a building. On January 12, 1795, they decided to build a Church 44' x 34'. This Church was built on the east side of the road near the residence of Harmon Wakefield. The first recorded election of the Church Wardens was on April 16, 1800. All this time the Church seems to have remained unfinished, for on April 28, 1812, a Committee was instructed to purchase material sufficient to build a pulpit, which in those times was not an inexpensive affair; they were so massive and elaborate as to be the most costly part of the Church.

In June 1818, the Society met in the Church and voted to extend the limits of the Society so as it might embrace the whole town of Hamden. This step indicated that the Church was not located centrally enough. In March 1819, a Committee of five was appointed to contract for a Church to be erected near the center of the town. The dimensions of the new Church were to be 48' x 36', with a steeple. The Committee voted to sell the old Church and land and apply proceeds to the new Church.

The Church was completed in 1820, and a Bible (still in good preservation) was then presented to the Church on August 20, 1820, by Charles A. Vander Henvall. The Church was consecrated on the first Thursday of October 1821. (An account of this consecration was published in the Churchmen's Magazine in Hartford, for December 1821, Page 381).

The general appearance of the Church was much the same in 1910, as it was at its consecration in 1821. There are the same Ionic Columns with their carved scroll capital below and above the gallery which extends on three sides of the church embellished with Grecian borders and elaborate dental work. The old original pews with doors are gone, replaced by modern slips and the high imposing pulpit, the

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conspicuous feature of the old Colonial Church, was removed in 1847, under the guidance of Rev. Charles W. Ernest, who found the Church edifice much out of repair. So the Church was completely renovated, both externally and internally. At this time, the spire was added to the edifice. On May 3, 1899, the Church edifice was seriously damaged by fire, from this time until restorations and decorations were completed the Church was not used for divine service. It reopened in January 1900, and is still the active parish which it was in years gone by. It is ranked among the oldest parishes in the diocese of Connecticut.

Source of Information: History of Grace Church, Hamden, Conn.
By Rev. James Edward Coley,
New Haven 1913.

Author:

Approved:

John F. Flanagan
Harold W. Davis Feb. 27-1939